

Fear of Self: Giving and Receiving

Study Guide for Online Meetings on Pathwork Lecture 155

Full text of all lectures may be downloaded from www.pathwork.org

Week 1: Fear of Self

Week 2: Fear of Pleasure

Week 3: Vicious Circles of Rage and Poverty Consciousness

Week 4: Misconceptions about Giving

Your present life expresses exactly, like a faultless mathematical equation, what your inner state is.

Man's Innate Capacity to Create PL 208

Week 1: Fear of Self

In order to realize that which you truly are, the fundamental prerequisite is fearlessness. **Every kind of fear amounts, in the last analysis, to fear of self.** For if there is no fear of your own innermost self, you could not possibly fear anything in life. Therefore you could not fear death either. **Fear of self is the key.**

Only when this pathwork has become concentrated and awareness has sufficiently increased do you realize that you are really most afraid of yourself. You recognize this fear by the constraint with which you encounter yourself, by all the more or less obvious forms of resisting, by your terror of letting go your defenses and allowing the expression of the natural feelings.

The degree of guardedness and of **prohibition of spontaneity and naturalness** is also not clear to begin with. These guards have become so much second nature that you do not even know that they are unnatural and that you could be quite different. Your inability to let involuntary forces guide you is a sign how much you distrust your innermost self.

Anyone who constricts his natural soul movements does so because he is afraid of them, afraid of where they will lead him to and of what they may make him do.

Anyone who is aware of this fear has made a substantial step toward his liberation, for without being aware of the fear of self, it cannot be overcome.

Fear of letting go means that the real self cannot manifest. It can only manifest as a spontaneous expression. Such spontaneity exists, for example, when knowledge manifests intuitively from within yourself, not through a learning process from outside.

Only the person who does not fear himself, at least to some degree, can even register, let alone have the courage to acknowledge and follow through such intuitive, spontaneous manifestations of the inner being.

Outer vs. Inner Values

Fear of not conforming to the environment is another aspect of the fear of self. For the inner reality may be at variance with the environment. The real values of the self may be different from the values of society. Only he who does not fear his inner self in this respect will refuse the ready-made values handed down to him. Outer values, whether right or wrong, still are shackles if they are not freely chosen.

One of the most important aspects of the fear of self is **fear of pleasure**. For the entity is created for the purpose of experiencing pleasure supreme, intense joy. The majority of individuals do not do so at all. The truly healthy and fulfilled individual, who functions as he is meant to function according to his inborn capacities, can completely surrender to the life force as it manifests in him with its pleasure currents. He will spontaneously express this powerful force; he will not fear and reject it. This will enliven his entire system with beautiful strength, energy, and delight.

He who is caught in guardedness and defensiveness and who is constantly watching over himself so that these forces cannot express themselves, numbs himself to a greater or lesser degree. **He becomes dead.**

The prevalent manifestation in this world, today no more than at other times, is what may be called self-alienation or lack of aliveness or disconnectedness. It is a deadness that also brings in its wake a sense of emptiness and meaninglessness. It is deadness because the life force in its vibrant flow is willfully interrupted and prohibited by an overwatchful, denying attitude of the outer ego.

You can only become alive to the degree you overcome the fear of self.

PL 155

A quiet and modest life brings more joy than a pursuit of success bound with constant unrest.

Albert Einstein

Daily Review PL 28 Exercise:

Keep a record of incidents that disturb you. Focusing upon subtleties may help us from becoming distracted by exaggerating or over-dramatizing a situation. Notice feelings of discomfort, where you suspect you may be uninformed, ignorant, unprepared, or unaware.

Each week, see if you can relate with the sub-topic.

All you need is a ½ page of lined paper per day. Create 4 columns. At some point during each day, jot down brief notes about each incident (limit: 10 per day). Eventually, this can become a thought process. The Guide refers to Daily Review as 'spiritual hygiene'.

1. Two to three words to identify each incident (no details)
2. What feelings or emotional reactions came up
3. The judgments or conclusions you came to at the time

At the end of each week, read through your entries and complete the last column:

4. What do you notice today that you did not notice at the time? Are there patterns?
5. Using your preferred form of meditation (sitting, walking, or while doing 'mindless' chores) reflect upon your early childhood experiences.

Week 2: Fear of Pleasure

Fundamentally, there are two possibilities if we bring Fear of Self to the simplest denominator:

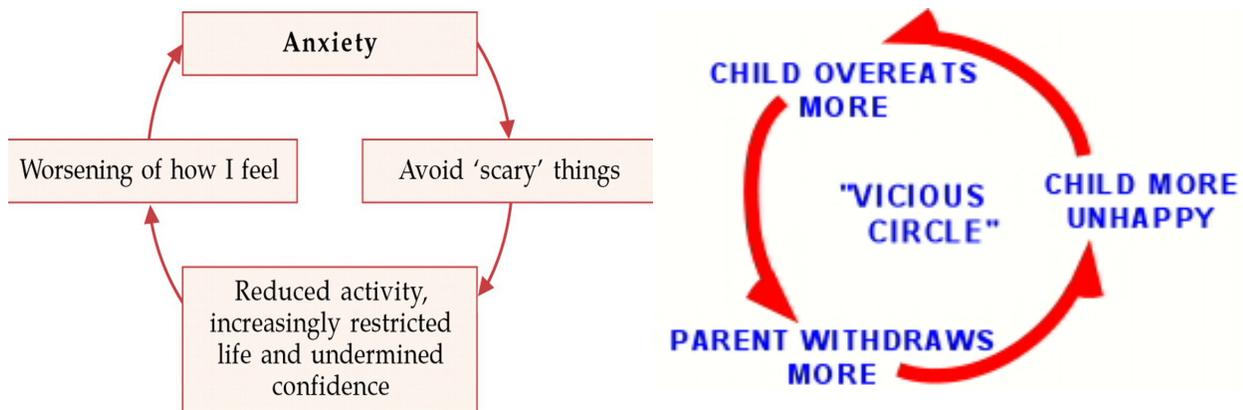
1. There is the possibility that something negative and destructive comes out.

Destructive forces... exist in every human being. They exist to the degree to which positive expressions have been prohibited -- first by the parents and the environment in the ignorant belief that these positive expressions are harmful and may lead to danger, and later by the individual himself. This is very important to understand, my friends.

2. And there is the possibility that something creative, constructive, expanding, and pleasurable comes out.

It is not true, as might offhand be believed, that only the former is feared. He who is caught in guardedness and defensiveness and who is constantly watching over himself so that these forces cannot express themselves, numbs himself to a greater or lesser degree. He becomes dead. **You can only become alive to the degree you overcome the fear of self.**

Both soul and body require pleasure. Without it, the person becomes crippled, his growth stunted. The helpless child is dependent on receiving **all its needs from others, from the outside world.**



The Vicious Circle of Fear of Self ref PL 50

- The greater the rage, the worse the fear of it becomes.
- Consequently, the more the individual guards himself.
- The more he is guarded, the less is it possible for him to be spontaneous and thus to allow the destructive emotion to reconvert to its original pleasure current.

PL 155

Exercise 2a: Draw a Vicious Circle.

Draw a circle of actions and feelings where you wind up feeling the same (or worse) about yourself.

Notice where attitude, understanding, and re-education could occur. For example: in the Anxiety diagram: what if you decided to face 'scary' things, and then discovered they were not actually 'scary'? In the dynamic of overeating, the child tries to 'solve' ongoing feelings of not being loved with the sensory pleasures of eating.

Defense → Fear of Pleasure

Not only the destructive forces are feared, but often love and pleasure are feared at least as much, if not even more so, because they require this unguardedness that trusts the spontaneous inner nature. **Love forces can remain alive only when the self is totally unafraid of itself.**

- love forces are feared, because they demand giving up the **watchful, stilted, premeditating guards** that make all spontaneity impossible.
- frustration and emptiness increase anger and rage.
- fear of self grows, and so on and so on.

Giving up guardedness seems like annihilation **because** when guardedness is given up, **something other than the watchful ego cooperates** in the process of living. Without this cooperation, life becomes impoverished. But the acceptance of this cooperation hinges on **meeting that which is feared.**

This is the process in which people are caught: we are unable to make the decisive step to overcome the resistances in order to meet that which is feared within. This is the one thing most individuals wish to avoid like the plague.

The more the destructive feelings are acknowledged and the responsibility for them assumed, the less will the person be driven, against his will and intention, to act them out in his environment.

PL 155

Exercise 2b: From [Seeing Others' Failures as Courageous. Our Own as Shameful](#) NY Times

1. On a blank piece of paper, draw a line right down the middle.
2. Think of the last time you saw someone fail. It might take you a minute to remember.
3. On the left side of the paper, write down a few words describing how their failure made you think or feel about that person.
3. Think about the last time you failed.
4. Write down a few words describing how your failure made you think or feel about yourself.

Notice which took longer to remember – your friend's failure, or yours?

Notice any differences between how you think or feel about your failures vs. the failures of your friend, and the failures of others.

What would you say to your friend if they felt badly about their failure?

What does it feel like to say this to yourself about your failure?

It can be amazing how quickly we forgive and forget other people's mistakes and how long we hold onto our own? Something needs to change, and it's not the part about how forgiving we are of others' failures.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/09/your-money/we-see-others-failures-courageous-we-see-our-own-as-shameful-why.html>

Week 3: Vicious Circles of Rage and Poverty Consciousness

Fear of Self makes itself known in indirect ways which you continue to rationalize. The acting out that happens daily in everyone's life may not take on violent forms, but it is all the more destructive in a devious and indirect way. **Acting out is excused by finding "reasons"**. This fact is not sufficiently appreciated and very much underestimated.

The Vicious Circle of Poverty Consciousness

The impoverishment man lives under is totally self-inflicted because he cannot face that "moment" in which he refuses that which is given to him, and holds in that which wants to flow out of him. **Guardedness impoverishes and deprives.**

-- The average person finds himself in the preposterous predicament of holding himself tight and restricted, guarded and over-watchful, unable to be spontaneous, always determining with the mind and the will, never allowing the creative processes to manifest.

-- Therefore he frustrates the tremendous need to be part of the creative process. He frustrates himself by withholding from himself the intense delight and pleasure of being in the flow of giving and receiving.

-- The ironical situation then is that he resents the world for not giving to him. The world wants to give to him -- and yet he can never see what is given him. He goes blindly through life resenting not being given -- he does not even know quite what.

-- He resents those most who really want to give to him, and rejects their giving, thus depriving himself even more of that which wants to flow into him. This would help him to give out so as to become part of the creative process again.

-- **Thus the person inevitably becomes enraged.** In other words, **he disconnects himself from the cosmic, creative flow of giving and receiving**, of the constant turnover, the constant movement that takes place in the life process.

-- Not being aware of his predicament in its total significance and ramifications, he then complains against the world for leaving him unfulfilled. These complaints and resentments may take as many forms as there are human personalities. And many are not even aware of making such a general complaint against life. This, too, may be rationalized.

-- And you must feel deprived because you make giving out of your wealth impossible and are therefore afraid of and closed up to receive. Thus you are doubly frustrated. Your refusal to let go of the negativity, the refusal to give of yourself makes you unable to receive pleasure, delight, happiness -- often even material success which does not involve the emotions.

It is part of your pathwork to discover it within yourself, to discover how resentful you become and how you refuse to budge from the negative position because you feel deprived.

PL 155

Real and False Needs Pathwork Lecture 192

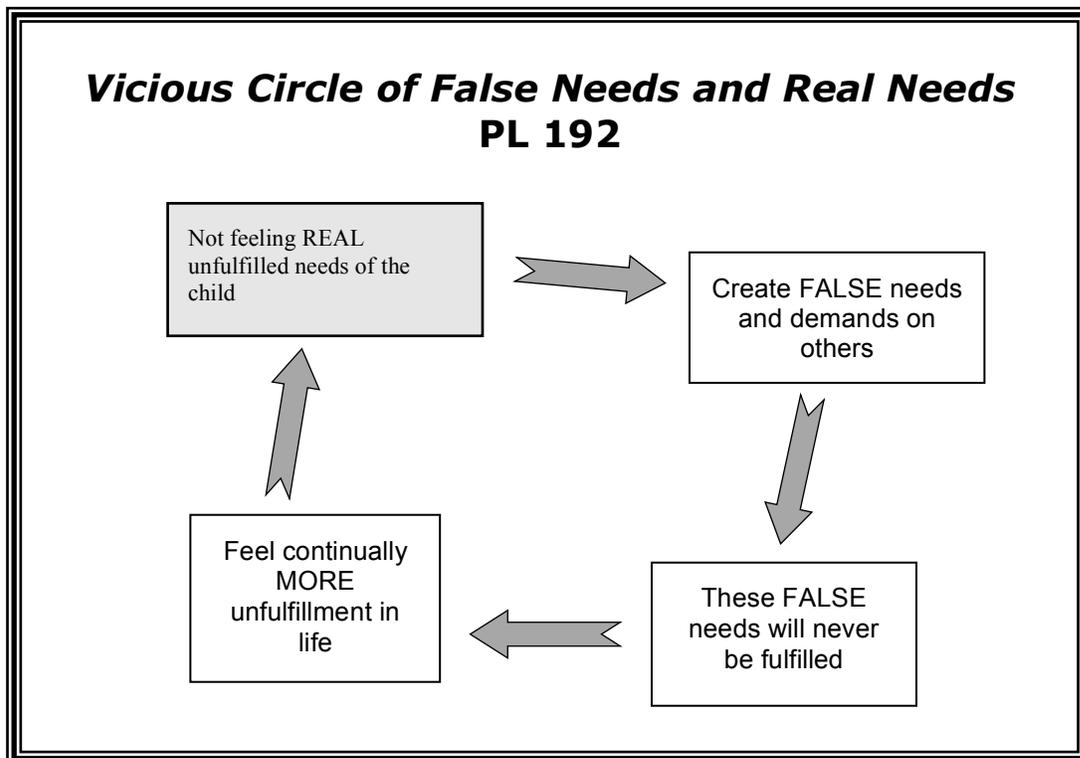
Worksheet by Andi Kiva for the Pathwork Teachers Helper Database (PTH)

REAL NEED

- A longing for a more fulfilling state
- Self-expression, growth, development, pleasure, love, good relationships ..
- Never require others to comply/give it to you

FALSE NEED

- When original REAL needs of the child are denied and projected onto others
- Create destructive soul conditions: hate, blame, frustration, emptiness, resentment, spite
- Can NEVER be fulfilled – are demands on others.



Way out:

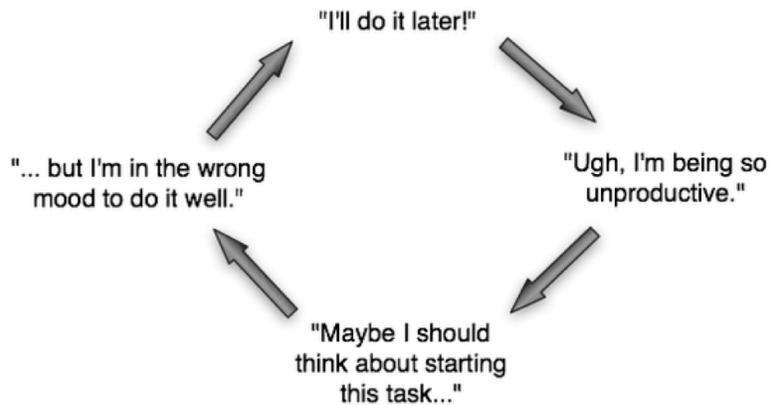
- To become aware of past feelings – bring them out in the open.
- To search within the self for fulfillment you've been seeking OUTside the self.
- Become conscious of blaming others for your unfulfillment
- Find where perpetuation of REAL needs have become FALSE needs.
- Give up the blame, experience original feelings, look within the self, your REAL need will be fulfilled

All emphasis to attain liberation and well-being must pay equal attention to the frustration of not giving forth and to that of not being able to receive.

Because the positive forces are restricted, negative forces grow. Rage is not a new emotion or energy current. **Rage is of the same original substance that was love, and can turn back into love** if it is allowed to do so. In fact, it is easy for it to reconvert to its original way of manifestation, for this is the way it comes naturally.

[The Procrastination Doom Loop - And How to Break It](#)

An article from The Atlantic illustrating how a Vicious Circles(PL 50) operates.



Exercise 3:

1. Admit that Rage exists.
2. Experience the truth of your Rage in a way that is not destructive to anyone
3. Identify with the emotion while keeping a sense of proportion about it
 - Don't exaggerate or dramatize what is already an intense experience
 - Do not reject the total personality because of feelings of rage.
4. Rage will transform itself into warmth, pleasure feelings, love.
 - This transformation may occur directly or indirectly via a number of other emotions such as sadness, self-pity, pain, healthy aggression, and self-assertion, etc.
 - All these energy currents must be experienced and owned up to. They must be allowed to exist at the moment, as long as they naturally exist.

Facing the Self

Once facing the self is undertaken, it proves not as difficult or dangerous as first anticipated. In fact, the relief and liberation, the coming to life is so real and wonderful that the hesitation seems foolish in retrospect. He who can bring himself to make this step is blessed indeed, for life begins to open up only then. It is necessary to let go and let come out what is there, whatever the feeling may be.

As long as fear of self exists, freedom and fulfillment of one's life are impossible, my friends, absolutely impossible. It is so much better to acknowledge this fear of self, to own up to it and say, *"Here is where I am at this moment, I cannot really allow to let out whatever is in me, for whatever reason,"* than pushing it away and make believe you do not have this fear.

PL 155

Week 4: Misconceptions about Giving

When the personality is harmoniously developed, the pleasure drive includes others. **It gives and receives** -- and this is as it should be. The basic struggle of the infant is to attain the pleasure and eliminate that which stands in the way. This simple, primitive struggle still exists within each individual. *Movement, Consciousness, Pleasure Principle as Essence of Life* PL 119

When you speak the word of self-devaluation into your inner being, you must become fearful, you must deny moving out, you must prevent your heart from flowing to the next one. So when love is given you, no matter how you long for it, you cannot accept it. You find ways and means to prevent taking it. Here, even in your divided consciousness, you find the unchangeable unity: **as you do not give, you cannot receive.**

Taking is directly dependent on your awareness of having earned the right to do so, of being worthy of it. And giving your love is equally dependent on that, for if you are not aware of your worthiness, receiving love threatens a worse punishment and exposes you to the pain of your real feelings -- which is the sense of worthlessness.

You can give love only when you can feel deserving of the pleasure to do so. And you can receive love only when you feel deserving of it, which cannot be if you do not wish to love.

The Power of the Word PL 233

Overemphasizing Past Experiences

So much pain existing in man's inner life is **the pain of withholding what one has to give,** and much less that of not having sufficiently received in the past.

The healing of damage from insufficient receiving can be much better accomplished when the individual realizes that **he is not helpless about his past,** that he contains forces whereby a new balance can be established.

This can be done only when he comprehends the far worse pain of frustration **when he does not give out what he has.**

This overemphasis of one psychological aspect has created a generation of self-pitying people who go around in life bemoaning the fact that they have been shortchanged, that they have not received sufficiently in their childhood, and that they have to continue as cripples.

The ability to unfold and give forth always exists once it is contemplated, once it is taken into consideration.

PL 155

Unconscious Cultural Distortions

Religion has emphasized that giving love is more blessed than receiving it. It constantly stresses, in one form or another, the importance of loving -- that is, of giving love, of giving mercy, understanding, etc. But there the distortion occurred in a different sense. There, the distortion was (and often still is) that **love appeared as a command, a pious command that is sacrificial.**

The image formed itself that to love means to impoverish oneself. Loving assumed the connotation of being a self-sacrificing deprivation. The command of love became more of an abstraction and contained the threat of forcing upon the individual certain actions that went against his interests. **To this day, many people's unconscious concept of love is exactly this.**

No wonder that man fears to love if it is represented as a pleasureless, sacrificial, and depriving act that impoverishes the self for the sake of being "good" and of pleasing a God or authority. No wonder love is rejected if the pleasurable feelings it causes in the body are denied and accused of being sinful.

One must then fear love doubly. Either

- one gives in to its spontaneous manifestation, then it becomes "wicked," or
- one cuts out the very feeling that makes up its force, then it becomes an unpleasant duty.

Mankind fluctuates between these two extremes: to either

- remain the greedy, selfish child, demanding to receive exclusively and not in the least being disposed to giving out, or
- forever strain to fit into a false concept of love.

Only when you look at yourself with great honesty and a great deal of close discernment will you find both these distortions within yourself.

PL 155

Exercise 4: [Paul Newman's Rolex](#) Travis Andrews for The Washington Post

The inscription on the watch hints at the story behind a marriage: “[My wife] has always given me unconditional support in all my choices and endeavors, and that includes my race car driving, which she deplors,” Newman once said. ” To me, that’s love.” <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2017/10/27/paul-newmans-rolex-with-a-telling-message-from-his-wife-fetches-record-17-8-million/>

1. Spend a day or two giving yourself the gift of unconditional support
2. Every time you realize that you are criticizing, devaluing, or rejecting yourself, imagine what a fully supportive partner might say to you. Write this down.
3. Write a few sentences about your positive intention to grow and transform.
4. Imagine someone who loves you unconditionally reading your words. What might they say to encourage you? Write this down.
5. What thoughts, feelings, or images about unconditional love prevent you from loving yourself?

Study Guide © Jan Rigsby: 2017

Guide Quotes © The Pathwork Foundation 1999

Full text of this plus all other lectures may be downloaded from www.pathwork.org